

New Mills Local History Society

NEWSLETTER



Low Leighton Friends Meeting House

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Spring Programme 1995

- 13 Jan 1995 Romans at Melandra
 Felicity Wild
- 10 Feb 1995 Kedleston Hall
 G. H. Sugden
- 10 Mar 1995 Pioneer Families from Bugsworth
 Geoffrey Timmington
- 7 Apr 1995 Old Manchester
 M. T. Burton
- 12 May 1995 A.G.M. followed by
 Making Ends Meet (Pawnbroking and Working Class
 Credit)
 Melanie Tebbutt

Civil War in Derbyshire

Ron Weston

9 September 1994

We had an excellent start to the season with a talk by the Society's chairman, Ron Weston, entitled "Civil War in Derbyshire". Ron took us through many events starting with the succession to the throne of Charles I. Charles, a deeply religious man, believed he had been given the power to rule by God. He had no standing with

the Army and relied on support from the nobility and gentry, the common people playing no part. We then learned of the people and places in our area which had played a part in the complete history of the war.

Once again a well researched and well presented talk from Ron.

Limestone Industry in The Peak

John Leach

14 October 1994

Much has been written about the transport connections with the limestone industry in the Peak, both railway and canal, but little about the industry itself. This well illustrated talk by John Leach helped to rectify this situation.

Limestone and its by-products have many, many uses, not only industrial, but also in agriculture and food. It was an integral part of the Industrial Revolution, indeed it could not have occurred without lime. As an illustration all houses built before the 1850's used lime mortar, and it is estimated that a

terraced house needed two tons of lime. Early batch kilns required about 15 cwt. of coal and two tons of limestone to produce one ton of lime, later continuous kilns only required 7 cwts. of coal. This shows why transport was so important to the industry in bringing these vast amounts of material together.

Since I started work as a Chemical Engineer (many years ago I) this talk stirred many memories for me and made it a very pleasant evening.

Local Government in New Mills

Derek Brumhead

11 November 1994

To celebrate the centenary of Local Government in New Mills (the Urban District Council first met on December 31st., 1894) Derek Brumhead gave a talk on the development of civic administration in the New Mills area. He traced its development from the Royal Forest of the Peak in the eleventh century, through administration by the Church and Parliament up to

the formation of the New Mills Urban Sanitary Authority in 1876. Derek explained the background and also showed us examples of the many works carried out by the Urban District Council from its formation in 1894 to its demise in 1974. The Town Council was then formed and has carried on the good work up to the present day.

Strines

Rosemary & Geoffrey Taylor

9 Dec 1994

The speakers at the final meeting of 1974 were members Rosemary and Geoffrey Taylor.. Following our walk around Strines in June Rosemary and Geoffrey came to give us additional information about the area, complete with slides and dialogue. After an historical introduction we were led along the route of the walk in June. Rosemary then spoke about the mills and the processes used in them, illustrated with slides taken within Strines Print Works just before its proposed closure in 1970.

Geoffrey gave us lots of information about local buildings and characters. For me, one of the delights of the talk was that Geoffrey put names to faces on the slides and usually had a little story about each

All in all a very enjoyable talk, packed with lots of information and I hope that Rosemary and Geoffrey will be back to show us the slides that I know we didn't see !

“A Maymed Soldier” of the Civil War



In preparing my recent talk on Derbyshire in the Civil War, I was disappointed to find that so little written evidence relating

to the New Mills area had survived. It is clear, though, that the Ashenhursts of Beard Hall were for Parliament, at least two of whom, Randle Ashenhurst and his brother, served in the army. "The brother of Calorie Ashenhurst' is referred to in The Memoirs of the Duke of Newcastle as one of ten officers captured by the Royalists after the Battle of Hartington. Ashenhurst had served as a captain under the commandant of the Parliament forces in Derbyshire, Sir John Gell, but has transferred his services, together with those of his troop of forty men, to Staffordshire. The fate of officers taken prisoner was not particularly dire:

Royalist and Parliamentary prisoners were usually ransomed and released to fight again another day. Other ranks often found themselves forcibly recruited into the army of their captors.

We hear of Colonel Randle Ashenhurst again in a petition from a wounded soldier entered in the records of Derbyshire Quarter Sessions dated 1649, after the end of the war.

" The Humble Petition of James Cawved, Maymed soldier Sheweth that about 5 years agoe yor petitioner beinge souldier under the command of Coll. Randle Ashenhurst in the p'liament's service beigne one of a p'tie by order appointed to keep the hall at Shallcross: Mr.Shallcrosse himself entringe the house: that ever since he hath lost the use of his arme and hand to his utter, undoinge.... In comiseracion whereof... may it please yor wor'pps.... to appoint that yor petitioner may receavee such yerely stipend... as you shall think fitt towards the relief of himself his wife and children."



Sir John Gell

John Shallcross of Shallcross Hall, near Taxal, was a prominent Royalist amongst the Derbyshire gentry and led an active military career. He commanded a regiment of Derbyshire men at the Battle of Marston Moor, the greatest and most decisive encounter in the Civil War. The Derbyshire

Royalists took the full brunt of the opening cavalry charge of Cromwell's army. Shallcross's regiment was virtually wiped out to a man, though Shallcross himself survived. He lived on, an active Royalist to the last, to see the restoration of the king, Charles II. He died in 1673.

Shallcross Hall shared the fate of most of the homes of the Derbyshire Royalists in being occupied by Gell's troops. Much of the skirmishing that

characterised hostilities in our county involved attack and counter-attack on the homes of the Royalist gentry.

Only a few windows remain today of the 16th. century manor house where James Cawverd was wounded. Shallcross Hall was rebuilt in the 18th. century and stands today as an imposing example of the Georgian style.

Ron Weston

The Local Historian

The latest issue of this useful publication (Volume 24, Number 3, August 1994) has been placed in New Mills Library (local history section). The contents include:

1) Pollution at Leadhills (SW Scotland): responses to domestic and industrial pollution in a mining community.

2) Bigamy among the labouring poor in Essex, 1754-1857.

3) Charity schools in the London Borough of Bromley.

4) 'Our only object is to preserve the beauty of the road', A nineteenth-century campaign to save a rural landscape.

5) Local history and lexicography. This fascinating article based on John West's "Village Records", is

written by the coeditor of the OE1) and those members who have studied post-1500 documents, such as probate documents, will find it of particular interest. The author tests unusual words found in probate documents against the OED.

Among the book reviews are:

"Commoners: common right, enclosure and social change in England 1700-1820" by I M Neeson: and "Cotton mills in Greater Manchester" by M Williams and D A Fannie.

Members may also like to consult Phillimore's 1994/95 48-page catalogue of local history publications.

Womans Work

Ron Weston, in his kind review of my recent contribution to the society's publications, 'The Downes Family', mentions that I am perhaps at my best when dealing with the lot of the female of the species. During my research for this book I covered many aspects of life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. When this research was at the half-way stage I was asked to give a talk to a local ladies club, it was to be 'Womans Work' of this period. Already I had a collection of pictures from old manuscripts and documents which illustrated the many tasks, gradually building up a complete picture of life as it really was. Apart from all the jobs traditionally undertaken by females (according to William Fitzherbert, 1523) I discovered many more.

Women helped on the land along with the men. It can be seen in these illustrations that they carried the sack of grain from which the husband sowed his land, they helped at the plough, they wielded rake and hoe, and come harvest time they are to be seen in the fields helping to gather in the harvest. Apart from this, they were also to be found in illustrations of road mending, and catching rabbits with ferret and net ! It was at about this time that I began to wonder, if women did all this, what was left for the men to do ? One illustration tells it all, just as it really was. There stands the woman with rake in one hand, knife in the other, and husband fast asleep under a tree. She is, as usual, doing two jobs and thinking nothing of it.



Just to prove that I am not a bra-burning feminist I ended the talk with a poem. It was written in the reign of Edward IV and was 'The Ballad of a Tyrannical Husband' (the original is held in Cheetham's Library, Manchester).

Rowena Clarke

THE OLD MAN AND HIS WIFE

This is a modern version of a ballad written in the reign of Edward IV., called "A Ballad of a Tyrannical Husband," the original of which is in the Cheetham Library at Manchester.

THERE was an old man who lived in a wood,
As you may plainly see;
He said he could do as much work in a day
As his wife could do in three.
"With all my heart," the old woman said,
"If that you will allow,
To-morrow you'll stay at home in my stead,
And I'll go drive the plough.

"But you must milk Tidy the cow,
For fear that she go dry;
And you must feed the little pig,
That are within the sty;
And you must mind the speckled hen,
For fear she lay away;
And you must reel the spool of yarn,
That I spun yesterday."

The old woman took a staff in her hand,
And went to drive the plough;
The old man took a pail in his hand,
And went to milk the cow.
But Tidy hincbed and Tidy fincebed,
And Tidy broke his nose;
And Tidy gave him such a blow,
That the blood ran down to his toes.

"High, Tidy! ho, Tidy! high,
Tidy! stand thou still;
If ever I milk you, Tidy, again,
"Twill be sore against my will."
He went to feed the little pig,
That were within the sty;
He hit his head against the beams,
And he made the blood to fly.

He went to mind the speckled hen,
For fear she'd lay astray;
And he forgot the spool of yarn,
His wife spun yesterday.
So he swore by the sun, the moon, and the stars,
And the green leaves on the tree,
If his wife didn't do a day's work in her life,
She should ne'er be ruled by he.

New Mills and the New Poor Law of 1834

In 1834 the Poor Law Amendment Act replaced the Elizabethan structure. The act was administered by three commissioners in London with a team of assistant commissioners to help and advise locally on the establishment of the new system. 15,500 parishes were grouped into 643 unions, each with its own workhouse and each managed by an unpaid elected board of guardians who were to employ workhouse masters and matrons, schoolmasters, relieving officers, medical officers of health and others. Justices of the peace were guardians, ex-officio, while the rest of the guardians were elected by qualified ratepayers. The administration of the Hayfield union, like all the other unions, is enshrined in voluminous files of correspondence at the Public Record Office (MB 12). The issues raised in the excerpts below reflect the wider, national problems involved in the changeover from the old poor law to the new.

1

In the adoption of the new poor law, each board of guardians was advised by an assistant commissioner. The Hayfield board re-

ceived great support from Thomas Stevens who, in discharging his duties found himself at loggerheads with his own commissioners. This was particularly the case with the appointment of George Lomas as relieving officer, which was not confirmed by the commissioners on the ground that he was already an overseer of Disley. Mr. Stevens in a letter expressed sorrow that any objection had been made - "*it is very important that they (the Guardians) should be kept to as good a humour as possible - They have to contend against a heavy pressure from without.. I earnestly request that for the future no letter may be sent to the Board till I have seen it..*" and he spoke of "*the excitable state of mind in the Unions of Hayfield, Glossop and Chapel*".

The "*excitable state of mind*" arose from the fact that there was much opposition to the creation of the unions; some people were actively campaigning against them. In May 1838, the clerk to the guardians Ebenezer Adamson wrote to say that the Mellor people opposing the Union had sent to Oldham "*to obtain information as to what steps they could take most effectively, to oppose the*

Union". At the forefront of this opposition was the vestry clerk of Mellor, James Bowden.

2

Townships found it difficult to shake off the procedures of the old poor law while bringing in the new. In May 1838 the vestry clerk of Mellor wrote to the commissioners asking if it was possible for the township to appoint a person at not more than £4 per year to collect the rates, since the overseers had done so for "time unknown" free of expense and allowance. The reply was "no". The guardians had appointed a rate collector whose duties also included making out jury lists, lunatic returns and lists of voters. Thomas Stevens, the assistant commissioner advising the guardians, was not impressed with Mr. Bowden and wrote; "*It will be remembered that Mr. Bowden was a disappointed candidate for the situation of Relieving Officer. He is a person of no weight and quite unworthy of notice; if allowed he would soon become very troublesome.., I feel certain that the respectable ratepayers of Mellor are satisfied with and approve the proceedings of the Guardians*".

3

In May 1839 Lowe Chadwick, Hayfield's vestry clerk, was appointed collector of rates "*for those townships comprising the Hayfield Union in which no Overseer or Churchwarden shall be willing or desirous to Collect the same*". The commission to be paid to Mr. Chadwick was 4d in the £ over £3, and 8d in the £ under £3. Unfortunately Mr. Chadwick soon got into difficulties. When the auditor, John Taylor, checked the accounts for Disley and Beard he reported discrepancies and the unsatisfactory nature of the accounts for the period ended 25th. December 1839 with £20 unaccounted for. At the end of January the commissioners received a letter from the clerk to the guardians, Ebenezer Adamson, to the effect that Mr. Chadwick had been called to a meeting

of the board to explain the unsatisfactory nature of his accounts He was asked to go home to get his receipt cheque book. The relieving officer was soon sent after him "*to expedite his return and to take care that no alterations were made in the Books before the Guardians saw them... the Relieving Officer returned with the astounding intelligence that Mr. Chadwick after packing up his books went upstairs into his room under the pretence of looking for a book which he said was missing, where he shot himself...*". In April 1839 a letter from the auditor said that the amount due from Mr. Chadwick was £68.14.8 "*a serious sum indeed for his sureties but trifling compared with the step he took...*".

4

In March 1838 John Taylor, a land surveyor, was appointed to carry out a valuation of all the union lands liable to the poor rate "*to be valued separately according to the Net Annual Value thereof, as explained by the Act of 6 and 7 W IV to regulate parochial assessments*" (the commission required a declaration from each hamlet requesting same). Mr. Taylor's valuations were: Hayfield (£385), Beard etc. (£649), Mellor (£218). Disley (£248), Total £1500. Mellor again proved difficult, led on by James Bowden. Instead of using the valuer appointed for the other townships they appointed another person in June 1838, not only at a much higher fee but without the sanction of the poor law commissioners. Retrospective permission was given, but the valuation proved unsatisfactory and the union eventually had to appoint the original valuer to amend the Mellor valuation at an additional fee. Even then the matter was not solved without a problem, for the commissioners addressed to correspondence to Mellor near Blackburn I

To be continued

Derek Brumhead

Joel Lomas: A note on a nineteenth century artist of New Mills

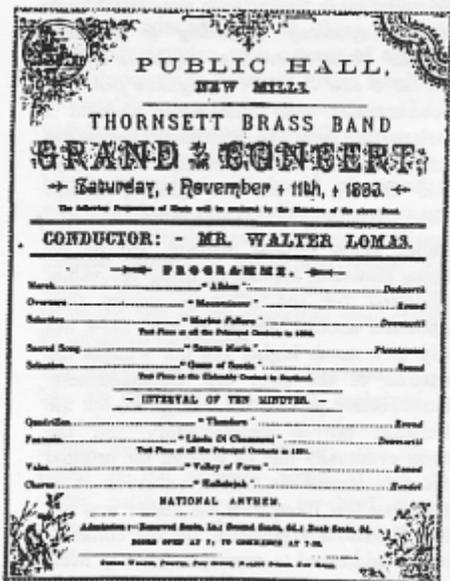
The front cover of the centenary book 'New Mills 1894-1994', is illustrated by a reproduction of a painting of the Torrs and Union Road bridge in 1884 by Joel Lomas. Joel Lomas was a late nineteenth century watch and clock maker in New Mills with a shop in Market Street (the present number 30 next to the indoor market). He was a keen artist whose paintings have been inherited by relations still living in the town. Reproductions of these paintings can be seen in New Mills Heritage Centre. They are particularly important as a source in local history because they record more detail than most photographs of the period.

No photograph was known of Joel Lomas until recently when a great granddaughter of his, Mrs. Enid Eastmond, who lives in the Wirral, visited New Mills and kindly provided the Heritage Centre with a photograph of him with his son, Walter Lomas (musician and conductor of Thornsett Band), his granddaughter and his great granddaughter (Mrs. Eastmond's mother).

Separately, Mrs. Audrey Huddleston and Mr. Alfred Harrop, who live in New Mills have given me information about the family tree and Joel Lomas, who was their great grandfather. Mrs. Huddleston was able to push back another generation by reference to William Thatcher (1790-1860), whose daughter married Joel Lomas.

It is here that we get a connection with John Potts, artist and engraver, who founded St. George's Engraving Works in the early 1820s, the building still standing on St. Georges Road. William Thatcher seems to have been an apprentice of John Potts, and Mrs. Huddleston has kindly loaned the Heritage Centre a mug printed with William Thatcher's name. Was it made and/or printed at St. Georges Works ? (A 'Pot Bank' is marked on the 1841 tithe map).

Derek Brumhead

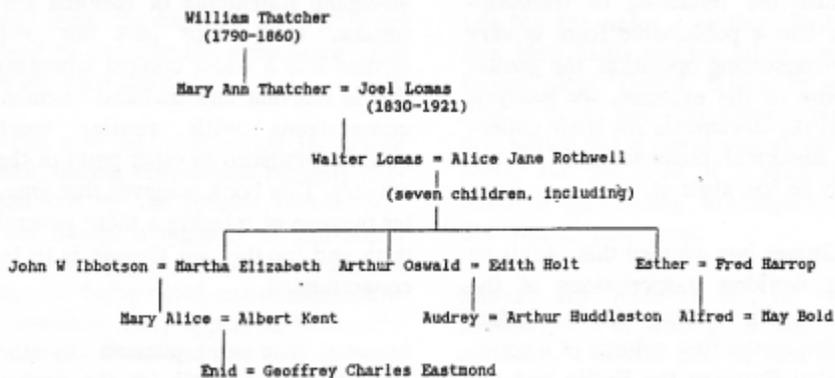




Left to right:

Joel Lomas, his son
Walter, grand-
daughter Martha
Elizabeth, and great
granddaughter Mary
Alice.

Details of family tree (provided by Mrs. Huddleston, Mr. Harrop and Mrs. Eastmond)



"Piggins, Husselments and Desperate Debts" by Jill Groves

Jill Groves has written a social history of those townships¹ of North-East Cheshire which lie between the Bollin and Mersey based principally on the evidence of about five hundred wills and probate inventories made between 1600 and 1760.

The transcription of wills and inventories is now a popular activity amongst local history groups. It is a rewarding occupation: there is much personal satisfaction to be gained by acquiring the skill to read old handwriting; once deciphered, a will with its accompanying inventory listing the worldly goods of the deceased rarely fails to paint a vivid, detailed and intimate portrait of the life of a family who lived in one's own locality in the distant past. It is the very stuff of history. Unfortunately because the rendering of transcriptions into a publishable form is very time-consuming operation, the greater purpose of the exercise, the analysis of all the documents for their collective historical contents, can all too easily be lost sight of.

Jill Groves has avoided this pitfall by using working transcriptions of the material for writing this analytical account as the first volume of a series (entitled *Between the Bollin and the Mersey*). Full transcriptions of the wills and inventories of individual townships will constitute future volumes.

With chapters covering such topics as housing, farming, local industries, the situation of women, together with the study of family life, cooking, dress, literacy and religion, this book is model of its kind and an inspiration.

I particularly applaud the clear presentation, the use of simple numerical tables and the inclusion of chapter summaries. With her detailed knowledge of the existing historical sources for North-East Cheshire, the author has brought many fresh insights into the history of this region. Perhaps the ultimate justification for studying local history is to confirm and modify the necessarily more sweeping statements of national historians. The author puts her own studies into a wider context wherever this is relevant and includes valuable comparisons with similar work already published in other parts of the country. This book achieves that greater purpose of refining a more general truth and for this Jill Groves is to be congratulated.

In case you are puzzled by the curious title, I shall let the author explain: *"A piggin was a milk bucket or pail made, like a barrel, of bound staves and shaped like half a barrel with one stave longer than the others to limn an upright handle. Husslements were small objects of little value which appraisors of a person's goods lumped*

together dismissively. *Desperate debts were debts owed to the testator which were thought to be irrecoverable because of the poverty of the debtor.*"

"Piggins, Husslements and Desperate Debts" by Jill Groves, is published by Northern Writers Advisory Service, 1994, ISBN 0 9517782 3 4 Price £4.50.

I hope to have copies available for sale at meetings in the New Year.

¹The townships are Altrincham, Ashton on Mersey and Sale, Baguley, Bowdon, Dunham Massey, Etchells, Hale, Northenden and Timperley.

Ron Weston

A Footnote

Quoting a passage from our publication No. 25, 'The Downes Family, Husbandmen in The New Mylne: 1571-1697'

"Sadly, the outer fabric of our old buildings does not show such great antiquity; several do hint at wattle and daub having been found within "Higg Hill" and one or two other houses in the district. There is a barn at "Overlee" with massive beams and great thickness of wall. It is not hard to imagine the winnowing cloth being used there"

I can now add that within this same barn, during renovations recently carried out by the present owner, Mr. Paul Sharp, a quantity of old shoes has been found. These shoes are, at present, being dated and evaluated for renovation. They appear to be mostly childrens shoes and one pair is complete, it has the squared toe and high front which we associate with the

period after 1640. The owner has kindly donated these shoes to the Heritage Centre and once work on them has been carried out, they will be displayed there.

Also found at "Overlee Cottage" by the owners Mr. and Mrs. N. Yeardley are several other items of interest (also donated to the Centre). Two glass bottles, part of a collection found within a wall cavity, one bearing the name Livesley, Railway Inn, New Mills and the other a small brown glass 'Bovril' bottle. In addition to these, two clay tobacco pipes, one which has a floral pattern on the bowl, and the head of a pick This latter is undergoing investigation to discover its past usage.

Should any member be, or know another, who is a bottle or clay pipe collector, I should like to hear from them.

Rowena Clarke

New Mills 1894-1994

One cannot help but admire the dedication of councillors who spend a great deal of what others might regard as leisure time in debating and delivering the mundanities that underpin our everyday existence: reservoirs, roads and refuse tips. How to relate a whole century of annals of civic worthiness is more than enough to make any writer blench.

Swallowing hard, Derek Brumhead threw himself into the project with a zest, expertise and insight that left us all gasping, the result of which is a centenary volume, "New Mills 1894-1994", that is anything but dull. On the contrary, it is a lively portrayal and intelligent appraisal of the civic life of a small town over the period which a future generation may well see as the Golden Age of local government.

The volume provides a clear and comprehensive picture of the origins and growth of local services and amenities in New Mills, together with an account of its public buildings. There are pen portraits and photographs of principal protagonists - John Mackie, Edward Godward, James Hibbert, Leslie Millward, and others - who saw a need, found the opportunity and brought about the remedy. Nor is the wider setting of the town neglected: space has been found for such topics

as the twinning of New Mills with Alsfeld in Germany and the changing relationships between New Mills and its more immediate neighbours.

Derek has been helped by a long list of contributors, not least His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, who wrote the Foreword. The Society's considerable archive really proves its worth on these occasions and provided the editor with a major source of information and illustrations. Special mention must be made of the work of Janet Allan who gave generously of her time and technical knowledge to design and produce this visually attractive publication. But undoubtedly the lion's share of the work was shouldered by Derek himself, it is his achievement, and for that we should all, as citizens of New Mills, be grateful. It remains to be seen whether other towns twice the size of New Mills, who share this centenary, will do half as well.

"New Mills 1894-1994", edited by Derek Brumhead and published by New Mills Town Council, 1994 (ISBN 0 952 1869 2 6) is available at New Mills Heritage Centre, price £5.95, and, as they say in the trade, at all good (local) bookshops.

Ron Weston

Publications of New Mills Local History Society

New Mills History Notes (A5 format)

No	1 New Mills in the 1820's: Part 1 (extracts from the Stockport Advertiser)	o/p
	2 New Mills in the 1820's: Part 2 (extracts from the Stockport Advertiser)	o/p
	3 Whitle Enclosure	£0.60
	4 The Mills of New Mills	o/p*
	5 New Mills (1830-35) (extracts from the Stockport Advertiser)	£0.60
	6 Railways of New Mills & District o/p**	
	7 Turnpike Roads and Riots	£2.25
	8 The Lost Mills of Rowarth	£0.60
	9 The New Mills Tithe Award (Central Area)	£1.00
	10 Deeds of New Mills and District	£0.60
	11 The Peak Forest Canal:Upper Level Towpath Guide	£3.25
	12 A History of the Providence Congregational (Independent) Church, New Mills	£0.60
	13 Memories of Strines	£0.60
	14 The Lost Chapel of Rowarth	£0.60
	15 The Coal Mines of New Mills	£1.25
	16 Bowden Middlecale-The Occupants of the Land (From Land Tax Assessments)	£0.60
	17 More Deeds of New Mills and District	£0.60
	18 New Mills 1835-39 (extracts from the Stockport Advertiser)	£0.60
	19 Three Local History Walks	£0.60
	20 New Mills Co-operative Society 1860-90	£0.90
	21 The New Mill and Some Other Corn Mills of The High Peak	£1.25
	22 The New Mills Air Raid:Friday 3 July 1942	£0.75
	23 The Peak Forest Canal:Lower Level Towpath Guide	£2.25
	24 The Living Past:New Mills People in Late Tudor and Early Stuart Times (from Probate Documents)	£2.25
	25 The Downes Family, Husbandmen in the New Mylne 1571-1697	£1.90

* See OP 7.

** Available as "Railways of New Mills and District: Their Development and Impact 1840-1902". Trans.Lancs. and Ches.Ant.Soc.Vol.86 (1990) £1.50

Occasional Publications (A4 Format)

OP	1 Gravestone Inscriptions:St.Georges Road Methodist Cemetery	o/p
	2 New Mills and District:A Look Back	£2.75
	3 The Peak Forest Canal:Its Construction and Later Development	£3.25
	4 Church of the Annunciation,St.Mary's Cathoile Church, New Mills, Graveyard Records	£1.00
	5 Ollerset in 1841:Land and People (Analysis of Census Returns and Tithe Award)	£2.95
	6 New Mills in 1851 and 1881 As Seen Through The Census Returns (Comparative Analysis of Data Using a Computer)	£2.95
	7 The Mills of New Mills (Revised and Greatly Expanded Edition of History Notes No 4)	£2.95
	8 The Enclosure of Thornsett	£2.95
	9 Thornsett in 1841: Land and People	£3.25

For details or orders please contact Ron Weston, Editor, New Mills Local History Society, The Thorns, Laneside Road, New Mills, Stockport, Cheshire SK12 4LU